

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 201

Celebrating the life of Robert Selden Duvall.

Agreed to by the Senate, March 10, 2026
Agreed to by the House of Delegates, March 12, 2026

WHEREAS, Robert Selden Duvall, a longtime resident of the Commonwealth and an iconic actor, director, and producer, whose 70-year career spanned memorable roles in theatre, film, and television, died on February 15, 2026; and

WHEREAS, born in San Diego, California, Robert Duvall grew up in Annapolis, Maryland, where his father was stationed at the United States Naval Academy; he developed a passion for acting at a young age and earned a bachelor's degree in drama from Principia College in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, in 1952, Robert Duvall began his professional acting career on the stage at the Gateway Playhouse in Long Island, New York, playing the Pilot in an adaptation of *The Little Prince* known as *Laughter in the Stars*; and

WHEREAS, after serving in the United States Army for one year in 1953–1954, Robert Duvall attended the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York City, where he developed lifelong friendships with his fellow students, Gene Hackman and Dustin Hoffman; and

WHEREAS, Robert Duvall starred in theatre roles in New York, Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia throughout the 1950s, then made his television debut in an episode of *Armstrong Circle Theatre*, an anthology drama series on CBS in 1959, and continued to appear as a guest actor on various television programs in the 1960s; and

WHEREAS, Robert Duvall's big screen debut came in 1962 as Boo Radley in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and he infused the character with the quiet strength that came to define many of his future roles; he earned several more film roles throughout the 1960s, culminating in his turn as the outlaw “Lucky” Ned Pepper opposite John Wayne's Rooster Cogburn in *True Grit*; and

WHEREAS, Robert Duvall was admired for his ability to ground extraordinary characters through his on-scene presence and gravitas; he became a household name in the 1970s with huge roles as Major Frank Burns in *M*A*S*H*, the title role in *THX 1138*, Tom Hagen in *The Godfather* and *The Godfather Part II*, and Lieutenant Colonel William Kilgore in *Apocalypse Now*; and

WHEREAS, Robert Duvall appeared in many other acclaimed films, including *The Great Santini*, *The Natural*, *The Apostle*, *A Civil Action*, *The Judge*, and *Wild Horses*, making numerous contributions to acting and filmmaking as recently as 2022; and

WHEREAS, Robert Duvall won an Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role for *Tender Mercies* in 1983; he was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role two other times and the Academy Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role four times; and

WHEREAS, Robert Duvall also won Emmy Awards for his work in *Stalin* and *Broken Trail* and was nominated for an Emmy Award for his work in the miniseries *Lonesome Dove*, one of his personal favorite roles; he received the National Medal of Arts from President George W. Bush in 2005; and

WHEREAS, in the 1990s, Robert Duvall settled in the Commonwealth, first at Butcher's Run in Loudoun County, then at Byrnley Farm, a historic estate in Fauquier County, where he and his wife managed cattle farming and equestrian operations; and

WHEREAS, Robert Duvall was a passionate advocate for the preservation of the Wilderness Battlefield, a unit of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Battlefield Park, and his work helped ensure that visitors may appreciate the historical significance and natural beauty of this area for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his efforts to support the preservation of farmland, scenic areas, and historic sites in the Commonwealth, Robert Duvall received the 2018 Richmonds Medal from Scenic Virginia and the Thames Landscape Strategy, becoming the first recipient from the United States to receive this distinguished honor, which highlights international collaboration in landscape conservation; and

WHEREAS, Robert Duvall will be fondly remembered and greatly missed by his wife, Luciana Pedraza, and numerous other family members, friends, and fans of his incomparable body of work; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby note with great sadness the loss of Robert Selden Duvall, one of the greatest actors in American cinema and an esteemed Virginian who worked to preserve the Commonwealth's historical and natural resources; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the family of Robert Selden Duvall as an expression of the General Assembly's respect for his memory.